



D4.1 Initial curriculum for digital curators

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Executive Summary

Digital curation is a multifaceted evolving endeavour requiring regular and strategic engagement. Individuals and organisations are producing information objects that need to be managed as assets if their value is to be retained into perpetuity. Delivering this outcome requires professionals engaged at different stages with the necessary digital curation skills. These professionals must remain conversant with emerging developments in both their own domain and that of digital curation more widely. To guide efforts in addressing this need, the DigCurV project has constructed a framework to support the development of curricula for the vocational training of digital curators working in cultural heritage.

1.1 Overview

The DigCurV Curriculum Framework, a major output of the DigCurV project, defines training needs, supports the evaluation of existing training opportunities and identifies key requirements for digital curation vocational training in the cultural heritage sector. This Framework informs curriculum creation for courses at all levels and of varying durations. While providing explicit guidance, the Framework is designed to be used even by those without specialised domain knowledge.

DigCurV has developed three distinct lenses or views on the Framework to enhance usability. Each of these lenses corresponds to a different group of staff in curation activities: practitioner, manager, and executive. Each of the three lenses reflects the unique perspective of the particular staff group, and presents in a cogent manner the skills, knowledge, and competences that enable professional success. By linking attributes to one of three broad staff groups, the Framework allows for the development of curricula targeted for each audience. The three lenses are supplemented and supported by a concept model and a defined terminology; details of the model and controlled vocabulary are included in the full report on the Curriculum Framework available from the project's website [1].

1.2 Background and context

The DigCurV project, funded through the European Commission's Leonardo da Vinci Lifelong Learning Programme, has produced this curriculum development tool after conducting background research, carrying out surveys, and running focus groups. Participants from across Europe, as well as Canada and the United States, have been involved. A full list of contributors is available from the project's website [2].

In developing the curriculum framework, DigCurV drew from previous work in a number of other projects related to vocational training, information literacy and digital curation. Identification of the need for ongoing vocational training in digital curation has been articulated by, for instance, the 2010 Training Needs Assessment Survey, conducted by Library of Congress' Digital Preservation Outreach & Education (DPOE) initiative [3]. This survey also recognized the benefit of categorising the audience for this class of training into three general groups: executive, managerial, and practical. Prior work in the DigCurV project identified and defined the skills required by each of these groups. The project also produced an evaluation framework that provided core concepts and, through a process of recursive evaluation, continues to inform development of the Curriculum Framework.

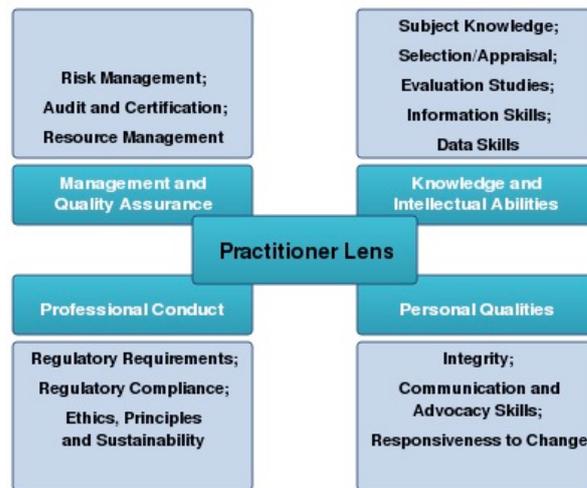
The internal structure of the Curriculum Framework, and particularly the structure and presentation of the three lenses, builds on the Vitae Researcher Development Framework [4]. This tool provided terminology that allowed individual skills, abilities and knowledge points to be articulated as succinct *descriptors*. The Vitae RDF was used in conjunction with an information literacy taxonomy developed by the Research Information Network (RIN) [5]. This taxonomy corresponds closely to the Vitae RDF and expresses the key descriptors related to information-handling and data management which emerge as a result of mapping the Vitae RDF and the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) Seven Pillars of Information Literacy model.

Among other internationally-renowned research initiatives in the development of training requirements for digital curators, DigCCurr (Carolina Digital Curation Curriculum Project) [6] has made a particularly strong contribution to the definition of the DigCurV Curriculum Framework. DigCCurr, based in the United States, focuses on the development of digital curation curriculum for graduate and doctoral-level education.

1.3 Curriculum Framework: Practitioner, Manager, Executive Lenses

The role of the practitioner, manager and executive lenses is to provide a concise visualisation of the areas of domain knowledge required within each role. The Curriculum Framework is designed to be aspirational, providing a range of knowledge and skills that can act as a pathway to professional excellence. These are expressed as descriptors within conceptual structures based on Vitae RDF and the RIN Taxonomy as described above. These lenses place the individual professional at the centre and divide the surrounding space into four quadrants, each containing three to five subcategories. These subcategories contain the individual descriptors, which are expressed as knowledge, skills, and competences relevant to each subcategory. The lenses also delineate personal attributes to help identify responsibilities associated with each role and to define or tailor specific curricula.

The **Practitioner** lens focuses on the skills, knowledge and competences required for the planning and execution of specific digital curation tasks. This includes an in-depth understanding of the tools and technologies involved in curation, their role in the workflow and the application of best practices. Practitioners are expected to have an awareness of how their work impacts on and is impacted by trends and developments in the broader field of curation as well as an awareness of the connections between their work and digital curation principles. This lens reflects an expectation of understanding and awareness of the larger legal and ethical context in which digital curation takes place.



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The **Manager** lens shifts the focus from an in-depth knowledge of specific tools and their immediate context, to a higher-level understanding of the procedures and components of curation programmes. The primary concern of this category of professional is at the project level; carrying out such roles as planning, executing and monitoring digital curation projects. This lens reflects an inclusive and holistic perspective of digital curation that places the emphasis on links between programmes and organisational goals. Attention is also given to connections with internal stakeholders and external communities as well as the relationship between the data being curated and the specifics of the domain.



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The **Executive** lens focuses on high-level strategy and places emphasis on digital curation in the context of the parent organisation's business model and mandate. This perspective orients towards planning, funding and structuring digital curation activity. The knowledge and awareness requirements of this role emphasise the larger legal and regulatory frameworks, developments and emerging issues in the field of digital curation, and the need for a sound basis for resource allocation decisions. The ability to communicate the significance and effectiveness of digital curation to a wide range of audiences is seen as fundamental to this role.



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The Curriculum Framework is not intended to be static or rigidly prescriptive. Its creators intend it to develop iteratively through ongoing input from domain experts to reflect the evolving understanding in the digital curation community of the knowledge and skills required by each category of curation professional. The door remains open for future research to modify the framework to maintain its relevance and for variations in implementation to be created to suit individual circumstances.

1.4 Implementation and use

In keeping with the strategy of continuous development, the DigCurV Curriculum Framework has been designed to enable it to be used flexibly. DigCurV anticipates that the Framework will be used to guide the development and evaluation of training programmes, to support the benchmarking of existing courses, and in planning ongoing professional development. Other potential uses for the tool include identifying qualified applicants in the hiring process or building an internal business case for digital curation activities. As the tool becomes widely adopted new uses will emerge. The full report on the Curriculum Framework available from the project website [1] contains fuller information about current use and future implementation.

References

- [1] <http://www.digcur-education.org/eng/Resources>
- [2] <http://www.digcur-education.org/eng/About>
- [3] <http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/education/educationneeds.html>
- [4] <http://www.vitae.ac.uk/research/428241/Researcher-Development-Framework.html>
- [5] <http://www.researchinfonet.org>
- [6] <http://www.ils.unc.edu/digccurr/>
- [7] <http://www.digcurv.gla.ac.uk/index.html>

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